

# BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

---



May 2007

## NEWSLETTER

---

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, May 17, 2007** at 7:30 PM  
Recreation Room, San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park,  
San Francisco

---

### May Program

#### The Singapore Botanic Gardens

**Jerry Krulik** from San Clemente will be our speaker this month. His topic is the Singapore Botanic Garden with an emphasis on Bromeliads, Bonsai, and Orchids. He has been growing plants for over 50 years. Although his first love is cactus and succulents, he has expanded his interests to include bromeliads, flowering bulbs, cycads, bonsai, and a few others. Professionally he is a chemist, but his hobby is botany. He has published about 40 articles on botany, in technical journals such as Canadian Journal of Botany, and in hobby publications such as Journal of the Bromeliad Society, Pup Talk (Saddleback Valley), National Cactus & Succulent Journal of Great Britain, etc.

He travels frequently around the world, with a preference for Asia. Since buying his first digital camera, it has become a priority hobby too. He has taken well in excess of 100,000 photos in the last 5 years, and uses them to extensively illustrate his talks. He began giving hobby talks in college, and has expanded the number and frequency of the talks in recent years. Since all his photos are now

digital, he has his own digital projector and keeps all his talks on a personal computer, ready to go at a moment's notice.

### May Refreshments

**Bruce McCoy** and **Brian Ransom** will provide refreshments this month.



This is *Neoregelia lilliputiana*, probably the smallest of all Neoregelias. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

## April Meeting

Last month, **Dan Arcos** provided a slide show of many of the bromeliads that we can grow outdoors in the Bay area. Members were asked to bring in plants that are grown outdoors and they came through big time! Our show-and-tell table was overflowing with outdoor plants in addition to the many plants that were in bloom in April. There were also several plants for sale that were left over from our display at the Cow Palace.

## June Plant Sale

Our combined plant sale with the San Francisco Succulent and Cactus Society will be on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> this year at the County Fair Building. Setup will be on Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup> from 3 PM to 8 PM. Sale schedule is

- Saturday - Setup: 8 AM to 9 AM, Sale: 9 AM to 5 PM
- Sunday - Setup: 8 AM to 9 AM, Sale: 9 AM to 4:30 PM, Clean-up: 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM

This is our **main annual event that brings in money to support** the society. Start setting aside your plants for the sale and save these dates to help on the sale.

Since this is such an important event for our society, we really need as much support as you can provide. You can help in three ways:

- Entering some of your premium plants in our Bromeliad display area
- Selling your own plants
- Working at the show/sale.

Remember if you plan to sell your plants, **25%** of the sales will be kept by the club. We are using the bar code system again. If you are selling plants, you must determine in advance how many bar codes you want made for each sale price (for example, 10 plants @ \$5.50, 15 @ \$10.00, etc.). You do not need to use all of the priced bar codes, but they **all must be made in advance of the sale** and placed on the plant or pot before the sale. You will be able to change the prices during the sale as long as you have a replacement priced bar code, so determine all prices you will need in advance. **Keith Anderson** will be making the bar codes. Notify Keith of the price and quantity of bar codes you need and we will get them made.. **We need as much advance warning as you can provide on making the bar codes.** If you can not make our May meeting, call Keith at 650-529-1278 or e-mail at e2keith@comcast.net.

**One of the conditions of selling your plants is helping out at the sale for a minimum of 4 hours during Saturday or Sunday.** Let's try not to have everyone sign up only for the last 4 hours on Sunday.

Even if you are not selling plants or entering plants in the show, we need your help. The more workers we have, the less time each of us has to put in – and we have more time to shop for some of those plants we just have to own. If you have never worked at one of these sales, it is really fun. There will be sign-up forms at the May meeting, but even if you do not sign up try to come to the sale.

Please start saving your boxes and paper bags. We never seem to have enough on the second day of the sale.

## Making Paper from Plants

This article by Kathy Dorr is reprinted from the October 1992 newsletter of the South Bay Bromeliad Associates.

Some time ago I read in some publication about making paper from plants. My first reaction was to promptly start gathering bromeliad leaves and getting busy. I have news for you – bromeliads are not the plant to use. Ferns, begonias, or plants which are less fibrous would probably work very well.

In case you are interested in trying the process, the following is the way to go about it. **HAVE FUN!**

Materials needed:

- Plants
- Blender
- Tub of Water
- Framework covered with screen
- Pieces of felt
- Lots of patience.

Cut the leaves of the plants into small pieces. Fill the blender half full of water and add the pieces of plant (a few at a time). When it becomes a 'mush' (well blended mess), dump it into the container of water and stir the whole mess well. As the water is still moving from being stirred, dip the framework down and holding it level, raise it up out of the water. You have a layer of the mush on the screening. Now, turn the framework upside down and press the pulpy mush on to a piece of felt. You can do this over and over and

stack one on top of another; in other words there is a layer of pulp and then a layer of felt, etc. When you have made as many as you are going to, replace the wet pieces of felt with dry ones and put something heavy on top of the stack. Now, replace the pieces of felt with new dry ones every day until the whole thing is completely dry.

I didn't try it, but I seem to remember that the article said you could use bleach to change the color. I believe you put it in the container of water and in that way it bleached out the pulp. It was interesting and fun, but as I said the bromeliads do not lend themselves to paper making. The paper was too coarse and fibrous to be usable.

## Cryptanthus

This article by Vic Przetocki was originally printed in the February-March issue of BROMELIAD NEWSLINK, journal of the Western Australia Bromeliad Society and is being reprinted from the January 2004 BROMELIANA, newsletter of the New York Bromeliad Society.

I've done several articles and talks over the years about *Cryptanthus* and one of the main points for growing good *Cryptanthus* is the medium that they are growing in. You have to start from the ground level and work your way up.

Most poorly grown *Cryptanthus* are due to a poor growing medium. An article that I wrote back in April of 1988 saw me experimenting with different mixes that I made and different fertilizers I applied to the plants. The conclusion then was to use only European peat as the medium and a high nitrogen fertilizer such as Thrive. Well, nothing has changed.

I tried over the last 2 years using a potting mix for the medium. It was cheap and the plants for a long time did nothing. I went out and bought bales of Canadian peat because the European peat is hard to get now and is also quite expensive. But then the crypts came to life in the potting mix. The plants started putting on some serious growth with nice, large, strong-looking plants forming.

I put the peat away and grew plants that were good enough to take out 1<sup>st</sup> in both the species and hybrid sections of our Annual Popular Plant vote. I guess the cheap mix started feeding the plants when it broke down. I probably would have been better off using a premium grade potting mix and the results would have come a lot quicker.

I've now started potting my crypts in the Canadian peat and adding perlite to see if this will make a difference. This mix will last about 2 years before the plants need re-potting. Potting mix, on the other hand, breaks down much faster, especially if earth worms move in. (Remember, indoor growers, Vic grows these plants outside in a garden or in a not too tight greenhouse – Ed.) I ended up with more mix (changed to castings) outside of the pot than in. What was left in the pot would be washed away if it was watered too heavily.

One plant that hated the soil type potting mix was *Cryptanthus* Marian Oppenheimer. In European peat it grew like a weed. Crypts will grow in a dry mix for a long period, being sustained by the moisture in the thick succulent leaves. But, the down side is that you won't have healthy plants of show quality. I like to keep my mix moist at all times.



This is a photo of *Cryptanthus* Marian Oppenheimer by Larry Giroux and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

I fertilize both with slow release granules and try to apply a liquid fertilizer at half strength about once a month.

To get the rich colors in your crypts don't grow them in strong light. This will cause them to bleach out. Plants, such as *C. beuckeri*, will only grow their best in very low light. If you are getting pink mottling in the leaves, then the light levels are too high.

I try to get all my offsets potted by the beginning of April, certainly no later than the end of the month. This gives them one to two months to develop a root system before winter comes. (April in Australia is equivalent to our October. Ed.)

The main pests with *Cryptanthus* are mealy bugs which cause spotting on the leaves, and slugs and snails that like to eat the flowers. Speaking about

flowers, when cross-pollinating to produce seed, the only flowers that will produce seed pods are those that form in the leaf axils. The flowers in the center of the plants are sterile and usually lacking a stigma. The pods produce about 4-6 seeds and these are much larger than in other bromeliads. The seed should be sown on peat and sprayed with a fungicide. They take about 7-14 days to germinate. If all goes well you will have a mature plant in about 2 ½ to 3 years.

If neglected, these little plants can be most forgiving, and with a little tender loving care they will spring back to life to produce those oohs and aahs they so well deserve.



This is a photo of *Cryptanthus beuckeri* by Ken Marks and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies.

Editor's Note – Vic Przetocki obviously knows his stuff, and yet we indoor growers can grow good crypts although we do things very differently. Some of his observations are quite opposite from the recommendations of the *Cryptanthus* Society, especially as to light requirements. He doesn't mention anything about pot size, but the crypt mavens contend that crypts make large root systems and need large pots. My crypts do best in smaller pots (4" to 4 ½").

We certainly do agree on Vic's main point, which is the importance of a good medium. We also use

Canadian peat because the chunky German peat we used to buy is no longer available. Our new mix is made up of finely ground bark with some vermiculite to which we've added an equal amount of coarse Canadian peat to get the pH down to an acid 5.5 to 5.7. To prevent the mix from holding too much moisture we've added small-grained perlite. You should add a little more perlite if you top-water, because the medium will pack down after a few years of top watering and will make a very soggy mix. This will be especially true if you use potting soil. If you wick-water, you don't have to worry about that. The goal is a medium that stays damp but not wet.

Our indoor environment is more easily controlled than the outdoors, but we lack and must provide adequate humidity. We fertilize with a combination of slow release 13-13-13 pellets, foliar spraying and top-watering at varying formulas of 20-10-20 to 20-20-40. I fertilize more frequently (about every 2 to 3 weeks) and at a higher strength (1/2 tsp. to 2 quarts water) than most growers.

Only a few of us have greenhouses, but still our indoor grown plants measure up well. I find that my crypts do better when grown under a light unit close to the tubes (2" – 3") than they do in an east or south window.

In the past when many of us used a much coarser mix which dried out very fast, we had trouble growing crypts and many members abandoned the genus. If that applies to you I urge you to order a few in our spring plant order and try them with our new mix. (With the temperature hovering around freezing can spring be far behind?)

## The Genus *Neoregelia*

This article by Karen Andreas is reprinted from the July 2004 *Orlandiana*, newsletter of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida.

*Neoregelia* is a popular bromeliad for the landscape, patio, and house. While it does not have an inflorescence that rises above its central water cup as do other bromeliads, dramatic and colorful foliage are the hallmarks of many members of this genus.

The first *Neoregelia* was described in 1825, although it was incorrectly described as a *Tillandsia*. Plants of this genus were known by various names until Lyman Smith created the name *Neoregelia* in 1934 in honor of Eduard von Regel, botanist and the superintendent of the Botanic Gardens in St. Petersburg, Russia. There are 134 species identified mainly in southeastern Brazil, although some are found in the Amazon, in



eastern Columbia and in Peru. Size in species varies from about one inch wide and five inches high (*Neoregelia lilliputiana*) to the large *N. carcharodon*, which can grow to four feet wide. In native habitat, they grow from sea level to 4,00 feet and in rain forest and also on coastal rocks and scrub near the ocean. Of all genera, Neoregelia is the most popular bromeliad for hybridizing; there currently are 3095 registered cultivars (and many more unregistered).

Neoregelias often flush intense colors in the centers before blooming. While the flowers open inside the center and last for a day, the blushing foliage will stay in color for months, often until the final decline of the mother plant. Neoregelias depend on good light to maintain foliage color. In general, tough leathery leaf Neoregelias can be grown in higher light than softer leaf Neoregelias, which do best in dappled light and some shade. In Florida, morning exposure brings out the best foliage color while Neoregelias planted in southern or western exposure need some protection (such as a canopy provided by a bush or tree) from the intense afternoon sun.

The most well known Neoregelias have a round, somewhat flat growth habit, as opposed to the upright deep tank type bromeliads. They need room to achieve their full, symmetrical form. Neoregelia pups that grow close to the base of the mother plant need to be removed when half to two-thirds the size of the mother plant so the bromeliads won't be crowded and lose shape. Some Neoregelias, such as the popular *N. Fireball*, *N. Rambling Rose*, and *N. Martin* grow stoloniferously. The pup grows out from the mother on a stem (stolon) which makes it easy to remove from the mother or allows the plant to grow in clumps, crawl up tree trunks or on mounted material, or in hanging baskets. Australian growers recommend growing miniature Neoregelias "hard" in bright light and shallow pots to maintain their color and shape.

Growers are divided on fertilizing Neoregelias. While some suggest a fertilizer with low nitrogen content (such as 5-59-10), used weekly at a quarter of the recommended strength, others do not fertilize, believing that fertilizing results in the loss of color and form.

Although they are true epiphytes, Neoregelias adapt to pot and in-ground culture. If potted, make sure the potting mix drains well – Neoregelias do not like soggy conditions. If you find a potted Neoregelia that is over-wet, you can remove it from the pot and place it in an empty pot, giving the underneath part of the bromeliad a chance to dry out. They do very well when mounted on driftwood, cedar, or cypress. Remember – no pressure treated wood! The key to successful

mounting of any bromeliad is to closely affix the plant to the surface to encourage root growth.

Large Neoregelias for the landscape include *N. cruenta*, *N. carcharodon*, *N. Takemura* hybrids, *N. Yin* and *N. Yang*. There are many large hybrids available. Some Neoregelias are cold hardy or cold tolerant (list following article).

Neoregelias do well indoors, inside pool enclosures and lanais. Be sure to keep them in bright light to main their color and in areas of good air circulation (but away from heating and air conditioning vents).

Pests and problems in Neoregelias are limited to scale, both white soft body scale and black flyspeck scale. Treat with Safer soap and make sure the Neoregelias are given ample room to grow. Overlapping leaves and areas with poor air circulation create opportunities for scale.

COLD HARDY*	MODERATELY COLD HARDY**
<i>N. cruenta</i>	<i>N. carolinae</i> & cultivars
<i>N. Fosperior</i>	<i>N. Burgundy</i>
<i>N. Marcon</i>	<i>N. Bossa Nova</i>
<i>N. marmorata</i>	<i>N. Yang</i>
<i>N. macwilliamsii</i>	<i>N. Yin</i>
<i>N. spectabilis</i>	

\*temperature into upper teens for short duration

\*\*temperature into upper 20's for short duration



*Neoregelia carcharodon* is one of the larger Neoregelias. Photo is by Michael Andreas and is courtesy of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies

---

**BROMELIAD SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO (BSSF)**

---

The BSSF is a non-profit educational organization promoting the study and cultivation of bromeliads. The BSSF meets monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 PM in the Recreation room of the San Francisco County Fair Building, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Meetings feature educational lectures and displays of plants. Go to the affiliate section of the BSI webpage for information about our meetings.

The BSSF publishes a monthly newsletter that comes with the membership. Annual dues are single (\$15), dual (\$20). To join the BSSF, mail your name(s), address, telephone number, e-mail address, and check made payable to the BSSF to:

Harold Charns, BSSF Treasurer, 255 States Street, San Francisco, CA 94114-1405.

---

**BSSF 2007 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

PRESIDENT	Carl Carter	510-661-0568	carl.carter@ekit.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Bruce McCoy	510-835-3311	bruce.mccoy@gmail.com
SECRETARY	Dorothy Dewing	650-856-1441	
TREASURER	Harold Charns	415-861-6043	Harold@States-Street.com
DIRECTORS:	Keith Anderson	650-529-1278	e2keith@comcast.net
	Roger Lane	650-949-4831	rdodger@pacbell.net
	Marilyn Moyer	650-365-5560	MarilynMoyer@comcast.net
	Peder Samuelsen	650-365-5560	Pedersam@comcast.net
	Peter Wan	408-605-2637	peterkwan@earthlink.net

---

**BROMELIAD SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**

---

The Journal is published bimonthly at Orlando, Florida by the Bromeliad Society International. Subscription price (in U.S. \$) is included in the 12-month membership dues: single (\$28.), dual (2 members at one address receiving one Journal -\$30). Address all membership and subscription correspondence to: Membership Secretary, Dan Kinard, 6901 Kellyn Lane, Vista, CA 92084, USA, membership@bsi.org

---

BROMELIAD SOCIETY  
OF  
SAN FRANCISCO

Roger Lane  
Newsletter Editor  
551 Hawthorne Court  
Los Altos, CA 94024-3121

---

<b>Dues for our society are now overdue!</b>
--

---